

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANA 00313 010839Z

11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05

CIEP-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 COME-00

AGR-05 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 /092 W

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R 010645Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7237

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, EAID, YE

SUBJECT: SOVIET SALT PURCHASES

REF: SANA 107, SANA 301

1. AT LUNCH JANUARY 31 SOVIET FIRST SECRETARY SAID SOVIETS HAD OFFERED TO BUY FOR CASH (ANY CURRENCY, HE SAID) 200,000 TONS OF SALT FROM YEMEN IF YARG AGREED TO LET COST OF ANOTHER 200,000 TONS OF SALT BE APPLIED AGAINST DEBT TO SOVIETS. SOVIETS TALKING ABOUT PAYING \$10 A TON FOB (WHICH ONLY ABOUT FOUR TIMES WHAT YEMENIS TELL ME THEIR TAKING PRICE IS). NEVERTHELESS, SINCE SOVIET OFFER LAST MONTH, THEY HAVE HEARD NOTHING FROM YEMENIS.

2. FIRST SECRETARY COMPLAINED THAT USSR HAD AGREED TO POSTPONEMENT OF PAYMENT ON DEBT FIVE TIMES, BUT HAVE NEVER GOTTEN A PENNY, NOT EVEN ON THEIR 1956 LOAN.

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PAGE 02 SANA 00313 010839Z

3. HE ALSO SAID MAXIMUM THAT SOVIETS WOULD BUY WAS 500,000 TONS, BECAUSE IT HAD TO BE REFINED IN SOVIET UNION AND SHIPPING WAS COSTLY.

COMMENT: IF SOVIETS DON'T PRETEND TO THEMSELVES THAT THEY ARE GETTING REAL REPAYMENT ON DEBT, THEN WHAT THEY ARE OFFERING IS \$5.00 IN HARD CURRENCY PER TON FOB FOR 400,000 TONS OF SALT. THAT'S STILL MORE THAN YEMENIS WOULD TAKE FROM JAPANESE OR KOREANS, BUT, SAID FIRST SECRETARY, CHINA HAS HALTED SHIPMENT OF SALT TO SOVIET UNION THIS YEAR "FOR UNKNOWN REASONS" AND SOVIETS NEED SALT SOON FOR FISH PRESERVATION AND OTHER NON-CONSUMER USES.

RANSOM

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SALES, ROCK SALT, DEBT REPAYMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 FEB 1976
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SANA00313
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760038-0422
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760293/aaaadejz.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SANA 107, 76 SANA 301
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET SALT PURCHASES
TAGS: ETRD, EAID, YE, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006